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MP warns of 'opportunist' building dangers

THE 'OPEN GOAL'

CHERWELL is an "open goal" for "opportunist" housing developers after council bosses lost another housing appeal, Banbury MP Sir Tony Baldry said.

The Conservative MP spoke after Cherwell District Council lost a fifth planning appeal over building homes in the district's villages.

The Planning Inspectorate overturned its veto on a scheme for 65 homes in Adderbury, south of Milton Road.

It brings the total number of homes approved on appeal to more than 500 since October.

The inspectorate's Tim Wood approved the controversial plan as he said the council could not show that enough homes were being built. The council has to ensure that enough homes are in the pipeline to meet demand for the next five years.

The council had also not finalised its "Local Plan" – a planning policy document that lays down where it will allow major estates to be built in the future.

Sir Tony said: "I think this is very disappointing."

"However, planning inspectors have repeatedly made it clear that if Cherwell is going to resist opportunistic planning applications, it needs to have both an agreed Local Plan and a predicted five-year housing supply."

"It's quite clear that until they do, I'm afraid this is something of an open goal for developers."

The council is bidding to buy land from the Ministry of Defence at Graven Hill, Bicester, for 1,900 homes.

Sir Tony said: "Hopefully the situation will change very speedily

By Sam McGregor

for developers when Graven Hill is signed, as it's clearly a substantial development."

And he said once the Local Plan was adopted, it would give much more protection to the council.

It had been submitted to the Government, but a public inquiry had yet to take place before it could be approved or rejected. A hearing is set to be held in July.

Cherwell planning chief Michael Gibbard said: "While the decision to permit this development may help Cherwell make up the shortfall for the five-year land supply, it completely contradicts everything that localism is supposed to stand for."

"Cherwell and Adderbury Parish Council are not averse to accepting development within the village."

"Adderbury's emerging Neighbourhood Plan and Cherwell's proposed submission Local Plan both recognise the village as a sustainable location to accommodate additional housing."

"However, despite both parties taking proactive steps to identify alternative, more suitable sites, the voice of the local residents and councillors has once again fallen on deaf ears."

Last October, developers won appeals over 145 homes east of Bloxham Road, near Salt Way, Banbury, and 70 off Bourne Lane, Hook Norton.

Two further applications for 75 homes off Barford Road, Bloxham, and 85 near Milton Road, Bloxham, were also approved.

And last month a further 85 properties in Banbury Road, Deddington, were also passed on appeal.



● ABOVE:
Banbury MP Sir Tony Baldry,
who told of his disappointment
over another district council
planning decision reversal

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ALL WINDOWS MANUFACTURED IN BANBURY

InBRIEF**Village post office moves**

■ THE Post Office in Lower Brailes has moved to Brailes Village Shop, in the High Street. It is being run as an outreach service by sub-postmaster Andrew Nardone, who also runs a branch in Etington. It will open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 9am to 1pm. For more information view postoffice.co.uk

Final chance

■ BUSINESSES have a final chance to enter themselves or nominate a firm for the Cherwell Business Awards 2014. Entries close tomorrow. There are ten categories, including customer care and business person of the year. Winners will be announced at a gala dinner at Dovecote Barn, in Adderbury, on May 16. For more information view cherwellbusinessawards.co.uk

Path to close

■ A FOOTPATH near Upper Heyford is set to be closed so that a bridge can be replaced. The footpath will be closed where it crosses a stream en route to Steeple Aston. It will be closed from February 8 until the work is complete.

Raising a cuppa

■ KATHARINE House Hospice is urging residents to hold a coffee morning in March to raise cash for its work. The Adderbury hospice's Care for a Cuppa campaign is looking for people to hold the events from Saturday, March 1, to Sunday, March 9. Those who take part can get a fundraising pack with posters, invitations, balloons, recipes and tips. For information call 01295 812161 or email sarah.brennan@khh.org.uk

Failure to stop

■ A DRIVER didn't stop at the scene of an accident when a cyclist was left with head injuries and a broken ankle. The cyclist was knocked off his bike in the collision with a car – possibly a black Toyota – on Southam Road, between Mollington and Great Bourton, at about 10am on Sunday, January 19. Police said the car's wing mirror came off in the collision. PC Russell Mizon has appealed for anyone with information to call 101.

Plea to firms

■ A YOUTH homeless charity is seeking employers to provide work experience for young people who are not in education, employment or training. It is part of BYHP's 12-week Unlocking Potential programme that trains young people for six weeks and then helps find six weeks work experience. For information call Louise on 07939 211898 or unlocking.potential@byhp.org.uk

■ 'Report verifies work put in by teachers and students'

College gets 'good' verdict from Ofsted

ONE of the county's main colleges has been given the thumbs-up by Ofsted in its first inspection in six years.

Banbury and Bicester College – which was once part of Oxford and Cherwell Valley College – was visited by inspectors in December.

The college now comes under the umbrella of Activate Learning, which also includes Oxford City College and Reading College.

The newly-published report rated it as "good" in all areas, apart from "outcomes for learners", where it was told it required improvement.

Lead inspector Alex Falconer said:

"Achievement rates for apprentices on work-based learning programmes declined in 2012/13 and were well below national averages."

"However, the proportion of apprentices aged 16 to 18 successfully completing their programmes by the due date was much better than that of their adult peers."

But the inspectors were impressed by the work of teachers who planned innovative activities to improve entrepreneurial skills and equip pupils with the qualities that will help them secure a job in future.

The report stated: "Many vocational areas have set up 'learning companies' through which students develop

By Sophie Scott

vocational skills.

"A high number of learners are gaining valuable entrepreneurial and employability skills through these."

"For example, learners on courses in independent living and leisure skills run a shop at two colleges, and public service students run a weekend car parking project."

Specific courses, such as hospitality and catering, were rated as "outstanding".

The colleges were last inspected in 2008, when they was also rated as "good".

Activate Learning chief executive Sally Dicketts said: "We believe that learning

programmes must equip students with contemporary, real-world skills required for successful employment.

"That can only be achieved by working in partnership with employers, developing teaching staff who are experts in their field and ensuring students have access to new technologies and commercial environments.

"I am delighted that the inspection team recognised the strength of our links with employers and with industry and their effectiveness in improving our students' employability.

"Our approach is to work



Activate Learning chief executive Sally Dicketts

with each individual, to understand their needs and aspirations and develop personalised programmes to help them on their chosen career pathway. We aim to help develop the whole person, rather than simply deliver qualifications and we do that

by working in collaboration. "This report verifies the huge amount of work put in by our teaching and management teams, and by the students themselves, to help people make the most of their time at college and make the best possible start to their futures."

Police issue cuts warning

CHIEF Constable Sara Thornton has warned Thames Valley Police may not be able to continue to protect the public if cuts deepen.

A recent Police and Crime Commissioner meeting heard that the force had cut £58m from its annual budget of more than £400m a year through efficiency savings.

But speaking after the meeting, Ms Thornton said: "The concern is if the level of cut in Government grant continues it will get increasingly difficult to protect the frontline and the people of Thames Valley."

Crime commissioner Anthony Stansfeld also said policing the region's growing population could become a concern, adding: "Our biggest challenge is a rising population with falling budgets."

Charity gets a £4,000 Rotary boost



Jennette Bradbury, the president of Banbury Cherwell Rotary Club, right, presents the cheque to Oxfordshire Sands chairman Karen Hancox

FUNDRAISING by Banbury Cherwell Rotary Club has seen a cheque for £4,000 donated to a charity which supports people affected by child death.

The cash has been given to the Oxfordshire Stillbirth and Neonatal Death charity.

Sands chairman Karen Hancox said: "We are extremely grateful and are overwhelmed by this most generous donation, which will be used to fund bereavement training for midwives. It will make a real difference to bereaved families in the local hospitals."

Developer provides a £1,000 grant

AN award-winning charity has received a welcome windfall in the form of a grant from a housing developer.

My Life My Choice has received a £1,000 grant from Sanctuary's Grand Ideas Fund.

The charity, which aims to empower people with learning difficulties by involving them in activities, has more than 500 members and runs groups across the county.

It organises activities that help members improve confidence, combat isolation, improve skillsets, provide advice and make their voices heard.

The charity received the Prime Minister's Big Society Award in October for its ongoing work.

Charity co-ordinator Bryan Michell said: "We are all extremely grateful for the kind donation from Sanctuary Housing. We provide monthly sessions and for a long time we've wanted to update our equipment but haven't had the available funds to do so."

The charity turned to Sanctuary Housing as state-of-the-art IT equipment was needed to improve the effectiveness of their regular meeting sessions and progress learning skills.

Mr Michell added: "The new equipment will help improve the delivery of our support sessions, while also enabling residents to develop new IT skills that will no doubt benefit them in the future."

Council in running for awards

CHERWELL District Council has been shortlisted for two awards, the "business transformation" and "community involvement" categories of this year's Local Government Chronicle Awards.

The business transformation award recognises the joint sharing of services and senior staff with South Northants District Council.

Meanwhile, the community involvement award recognises the council's partnership with public, private and voluntary organisations.

Deputy leader George Reynolds said: "The awards have seen their highest number of entries ever – so to be shortlisted is a fantastic achievement."

"I am delighted that the hard work done by Cherwell staff has been recognised."

Winners will be announced on March 12.

False rape claim lands woman in prison for eight months

A WOMAN who cried rape has been jailed after a judge said a secret video recording saved her ex-partner's reputation.

Sarah Boyland, of Lanchester Drive, Banbury, lied to police between April 10 and April 20 last year, resulting in her former boyfriend being arrested and held in police custody for 11 hours.

The 33-year-old mother-of-two has now admitted one count of

perverting the course of justice and was jailed on Friday for eight months at Oxford Crown Court.

Judge Ian Pringle said Boyland had invited her ex-lover to her house and offered to have sex with him.

But he was suspicious and secretly filmed the encounter.

The judge said it was only because of this recording that her former partner, who was not named

during the hearing, was able to prove beyond doubt that he was innocent.

He said: "That recording saved him from serving a very substantial prison sentence."

"Although it is not exactly the type thing you would expect from a current or even ex-partner, it certainly saved his bacon."

Terence Woods, defending, said that his client was in a "fragile

state" and under the influence of alcohol when she made the complaint.

But Judge Pringle told Boyland it was false allegations such as hers which made it so difficult for genuine rape victims to come forward.

She was sentenced to eight months in prison and smiled to her friend in the public gallery as she was taken down to the cells.

■ Trial continues of police constable, car repair man and wife

Wife denies knowing about police force data



Sugra Hanif, pictured arriving at an earlier hearing last year with her solicitor

THE wife of a man who allegedly got his police officer lover to steal crash victims' details, told a court she thought he got the information from "friends and family".

Paramjeet Kaur, 26, denied knowing the information her husband Raza Khan was using came from Thames Valley Police officer, PC Sugra Hanif, Winchester Crown Court was told this week.

Hanif, 26, of Bretch Hill, Banbury, is accused of making a note of the personal information of people involved in car accidents from police computers and then phoning and pressuring them into making personal-injury claims.

She would then pass the information on to Khan and the trio would allegedly pocket £600 a time for referring them to legal firms.

Khan, who ran a repair garage, allegedly forced Hanif to access the information from Thames Valley Police computers. She had worked for the force since 2008.

But when he was due to start his defence, Khan chose to not give evidence in front of the jury of six men and six women.

Defence lawyer, Sukhdev Bhomra, asked Paramjeet Kaur: "Did you know PC Hanif was supplying Mr Khan with these details? Did you have any idea Mr Khan was getting information from PC Hanif?"

She said: "No. I thought Mr Khan got the details from friends and family or people who had been recommended to go to him by other friends."

"I didn't ask how much money he made from the claims. He never paid me."

Hanif denies obtaining personal data from the

By Sophie Scott

Thames Valley Police control and command system and a charge of disclosing the personal data.

Khan, 27, from Birmingham, denies obtaining personal data from the TVP control and command system.

Kaur, 26, also from Birmingham, Khan and Hanif all deny one count of conspiracy to commit misconduct in a public office.

The trial continues.

InBRIEF

Verdict on man's canal death

■ A HOMELESS man, found dead in a canal, died as a result of an accident, an inquest heard. Paul Mackey, 38, was found floating face down in the Oxford Canal between Little Bourton and Cropredy on August 12 last year by a group of boaters, Oxford Coroner's Court was told. The court heard the boaters had seen him alive at 3pm, but when they returned at 5.30pm they found him dead in the water and called the police. They used a boat hook to keep his body from floating away while they waited for the police to arrive. Mr Mackey was born in Germany and was not known to have any relatives. He was found to have cannabis in his system. Consultant pathologist Dr Sanjiv Manek said Mr Mackey had died from drowning. In his verdict at Oxford Coroners Court, coroner Darren Salter said Mr Mackey had fallen into the canal accidentally.

Chip pan blaze

■ FIREFIGHTERS were called to Fiennes Road, Banbury, after a fire started in a chip pan. They were called to the address at 9.52pm on Sunday. No one was injured and fans were used to remove the smoke from the home.

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Cloudy2Clear service the Oxford, Banbury & Abingdon areas and Trevor is finding that his approach is a major factor

in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show

how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

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Council hotline to halt dog fouling

A NORTH Oxfordshire council has set up an online facility for people to report dog owners who don't pick up after their pets.

The move by Cherwell District Council is part of a crackdown on dog fouling.

People can use the confidential service to report details of the owner, the dog and where it fouled.

It will also be used by the council to target hotspots. The council's clean and green chief, Nigel Morris, said: "Our officers can't be everywhere at once but our residents can. By providing us with as much information about the dog, owner, times and locations of dog fouling it gives us a better chance of being in the right place at the right time to catch people flouting the law."

"Cherwell provides free dog poo bags across the district so there is no excuse for owners to not pick up after their pet. This new, confidential form will enable people to provide us with the information we need to take action against those who deliberately blight the area for others."

For information, visit cherwell.gov.uk

Police plan to trace danger pesticides

FARMERS are being warned about the sale of illegal and dangerous pesticides.

Thames Valley Police is investigating the distribution and use of counterfeit and illegal pesticides across Oxfordshire as part of "Operation Silo".

Chief Superintendent Gilbert Houalla said: "The Health and Safety Executive has shown that this illegal activity is happening across the UK. We will investigate to what level, if any, it is happening across the Thames Valley region."

He appealed for anyone with information about suspicious sales to call police on 101.

He said: "This type of crime is difficult to identify and spot happening, so receiving intelligence will be a vital part of our investigation. This is where members of the public and, more importantly, members of the rural and farming community and pesticide industry will come in."

The bad pesticides can cause crop failures, damage to wildlife, food contamination, and also endanger the health of the person spraying the crops."



Lawrie Stratford

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NHS 111: for help on which service to choose.

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A&E: life-threatening conditions like choking, chest pains and severe breathing problems.

■ Call to educate people over where to go for their health needs

How repeat patients are clogging up A&E

ACCIDENT and emergency staff are seeing some people more than 50 times in one year, taking up more than 1,000 consultations.

The leader of a health watchdog said repeat visits were putting further pressure on A&E despite more suitable NHS services being available.

The figures, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, show 57 people in 2011/12 and 59 in 2012/13 attended Oxford's John Radcliffe Hospital more than ten times.

This resulted in 2,107 attendances, while less than five went more than 50 or 100 times in 2011/12 – a total of 272 visits.

NHS watchdog chief Lawrie Stratford said repeat visits "clog the system".

Nationally, the figures showed about 12,000 people visited ten or more times at the same unit – and the statistics included a patient who attended Luton and Dunstable Hospital 234 times in a year, and another who went 223 times to Sheffield's Northern General.

Mr Stratford – who is chairman of the Oxfordshire joint health overview and scrutiny committee – said: "The numbers are disturbing. We need to dig deep to find out more."

Oxfordshire MP Andrew Smith said the figures were "quite extraordinary" and added: "Clearly more needs to be done to educate some people about when it's right to go to A&E and when it isn't."

By Oliver Evans

About 2,000 to 2,500 people attend Oxford's John Radcliffe and Banbury's Horton hospitals each week. Both are run by the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust.

Figures released for the week up to January 12, show the trust again missed a key A&E waiting target.

Some 89.1 per cent were admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours, against a target of 95

per cent – meaning 218 waited over that time.

The trust has missed the target every week, apart from two weeks since October 21.

And between January 9-15, figures show 44 planned operations were cancelled – beds are often taken by emergency patients – and 24 incidents were recorded of ambulances waiting outside the A&E department.

An average 133 bed-blocking incidents were recorded each day, where a patient is well enough to go home but community services are not ready to take them.



The entrance to the Horton Hospital



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InBRIEF

MP lobbies over tree diseases

■ BANBURY MP Sir Tony Baldry, pictured, has lobbied his colleagues in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs over steps it has taken to safeguard trees from the threat of disease. Dan Rogerson, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the department, said a string of initiatives were in the pipeline, including restrictions on some imports and creating a plant health register. The move comes after some types of tree disease have been found in the UK in recent years. Several cases of Ash dieback were found in Oxfordshire in 2012 and led to 300 Ash trees at Bicester's Kingsmere development being destroyed.

**Home raided**

■ A 32-inch television and two laptops have been stolen from a Grimsbury home. The burglary happened in East Street between 3.30am and 7.20am on Thursday, January 16. Call police on 101 with any information.

■ Pleas for help ranged from parrot in a cage to dog in a sofa

Animal rescues cost the county £33,800

Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service operations commander Nigel Wilson



FIREFIGHTERS across Oxfordshire have been taking the traditional "cat-stuck-up-a-tree rescue" to a whole new level.

Figures released under the Freedom of Information Act reveal they were called out to bizarre incidents, including a parrot stuck in a cage, a hamster jammed in an oven and a horse stuck in manure.

Over the last four years, the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has rescued 181 animals – 53 pets, 28 farm animals and 15 birds – at a total cost of £33,800.

But Nigel Wilson, Operations Commander for Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service, said the cost was a "tiny fraction" of the service's £25m annual budget.

He said: "This is a small spend, when significant sums may otherwise have to be spent on rescuing or searching for members of the public who get into trouble when trying to rescue an animal themselves."

He said the service was working to educate the public to try to reduce the figures.

By Tom Burrows

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has a specialist team who are trained to rescue large animals, but some of the more bizarre call-outs included: a dog trapped in a sofa, a muntjac deer stuck in railings, a horse sunk in a manure heap, a dog stuck in bannisters on a staircase, a hamster rescued from oven, a parrot stuck in its cage and a call to free a cat from behind car dashboard.

Mr Wilson said: "We encourage dog walkers to be careful in icy weather and ensure that dogs are kept on leads to keep them away from frozen watercourses. If a dog runs on ice, it can very often give way under a dog's weight. Then, owners cannot help their animal without putting themselves or others in significant danger.

"If messages like this are heeded, it will help to bring down the number of animal rescues we attend and the associated costs."

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■ Grandmother woken by intruder Stab-threat burglar gets prison term

A BURGLAR has been jailed for a break-in where he threatened to stab a grandmother in her bed.

Last week, Mark Haddock, of Harlech Close, Banbury, pleaded guilty to one count of burglary when he appeared at Oxford Crown Court.

The 34-year-old father-of-three broke into a house in Sanford Green, Banbury, on July 29 last year using a tea towel as a mask.

Gary Venturi, prosecuting, said Lesley Allen was asleep in her bed, next to her 13-year-old granddaughter, when she was woken by Haddock.

He told Judge Patrick Eccles that Haddock appeared in her bedroom doorway and said: "If you don't give me money now I'll stab you."

Mr Venturi said both victims were "petrified". Mrs Allen started screaming out for someone to call the police, which caused Haddock to run away.

Before he escaped, Haddock stole a £50 watch, credit card, passport, tobacco and left his

By Joe Nimmo

fingerprints on a plastic money bottle, Mr Venturi said.

Lee Bennett, of Harrowby Road, Banbury, pleaded guilty to handling stolen goods after his prints were also found on the same money bottle.

Mr Venturi said Haddock had 14 convictions for 37 offences, while Bennett had 66 convictions for 136 offences.

Passing sentence, Judge Patrick Eccles said that he had taken into account that last year Haddock had lost his wife in tragic circumstances, which ended a long period of him staying out of trouble.

But the judge said the offence was aggravated by the use of threats and the presence of children in the house. He sentenced Haddock to three-and-a-half years in prison.

Bennett received eight months in prison.



Georgia Wright gives a rabbit a cuddle, watched by twins Lake and Ravi Black

OX64744

Winter-time wonders at zoo

MOST people visit farms and zoos during the warmer summer months, but Fairytale Farm is proving that animals are a popular attraction no matter what time of year.

Last week the family farm attraction at Southcombe opened for business for the first time this year, having closed for the season in November.

It was a family outing for four-year-old twins Lake and Ravi Black, who were taken to the farm with their cousin, Georgia Wright, also four.

Owner Nick Laister said: "Visitors are telling us that they would like to be able to visit the farm throughout the winter. Lots of people have been turning up at the farm to find us closed."

"So, we have decided to pilot winter openings, with all of the attractions open as normal."

Previously it was only open from April to November.

Everything at the farm is designed around the needs of children with sensory, learning and physical disabilities.

Along with the playground and multi-sensory gardens, the children had their turn at cuddling rabbits in the animal zone.

Georgia said: "It was fun. My favourite bit was stroking the donkeys."

Fairytale Farm is now open on Tuesdays and Thursdays until March, when it will then be open full-time. Tickets cost £5 for adults and £4.75 for children over three.

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■ Cautious welcome to improvement Exams: Pupils doing better

RESULTS, just published, show schools in Oxfordshire are doing better than their counterparts in England when it comes to GCSEs.

The Department for Education has released figures which show 60.6 per cent of the county's pupils taking their exams at the end of Year 11 in 2013 got five A* to C grades, including English and maths.

In the 2012 GCSE results, 57.9 per cent of pupils in the county reached the benchmark.

Last year's national average was 59.2 per cent.

And it is the best the county has done yet — marking an almost three percentage point increase on the previous year.

Last year, the county's education chief, Melinda

By Sophie Scott

Tilley, said it would take longer than a year for results to improve.

But she does not want to rest on her laurels and is encouraging schools to target even higher results.

Mrs Tilley said: "We are chuffed to meet the 60 per cent rate. Now we can set a target for 70 per cent."

"If you get good results I don't think you should be complacent. You should strive for even better."

"I am always pleased by how our schools are doing and surprised at the same time, and, of course, cautious."

"But I am optimistic that we are on the right track now."

Academies in Oxfordshire were among the highest performing schools in the county for GCSE results.

But headteachers have said

they are not certain the status is the only factor behind the grades.

Seven schools in Oxfordshire managed to get at least 70 per cent of pupils to achieve five A* to C grades, including English and maths, and all are either academies or academy converters.

It was also good news with A-level results as teenagers in the county gained a higher points score for 2013.

The score is calculated by the grades students get — for example a maximum of 300 points is awarded for an A* grade.

For 2012 the average figure across the county's 50 colleges and sixth forms, which took either A-Levels or the International Baccalaureate, was 703.3.

But last year the figure increased to 758.4 and the number of organisations offering the exams rose to 52.

InBRIEF

'Effective action' is being taken

■ A PRIMARY school has been told it is taking "effective action" after it was judged to require improvement.

Wroxton Church of England Primary School, in Lampitts Green, Wroxton, was told last September that it required improvement after an Ofsted visit.

In its first monitoring visit, which took place this month, inspector Daniel Towl said senior leaders and governors were taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement.

The initial inspection said: "Pupils do not develop their writing fast enough. Consequently, there are weaknesses in handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar."

Fundraising night

■ THE Samaritans are hosting a quiz and buffet night next month which is open to all.

The event, to be held at the Depuis Centre, St John's Church, Banbury, will start at 7.30pm on Friday, February 7.

Teams of up to six members are invited to join in the fun.

The quiz costs £10 per person, which includes the quiz and a buffet meal. All proceeds from the event will go to Banbury and District Samaritans.

For more information, contact John Haywood by phone on 01295 257587 or email a.j.haywood@hotmail.co.uk

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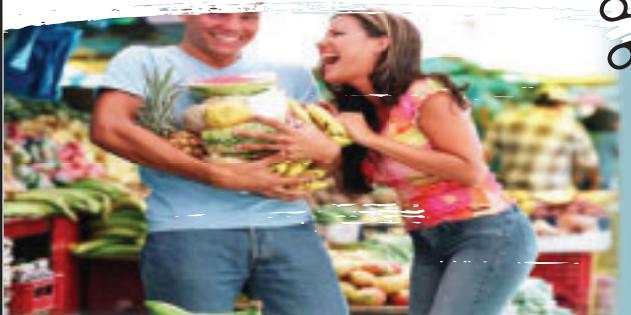
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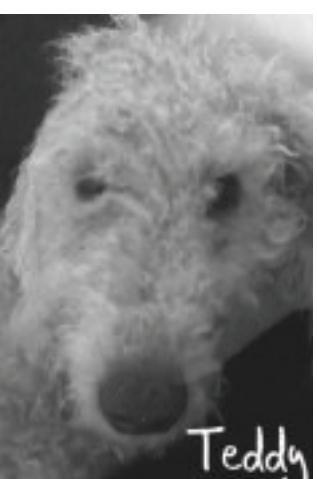
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New statistics show a 40-year low No joy over drop in road deaths tally

THE annual carnage on Oxfordshire roads fell to a 40-year low last year, claiming 19 lives.

Chief Inspector Henry Parsons, head of the Thames Valley Police roads unit, said: "This is no celebration. We want that figure to be zero."

And while the number of fatal accidents fell 32 per cent – from 28 in 2012 – the Oxfordshire

By Ben Wilkinson



County Council figures reveal that there were 299 accidents in which people were seriously injured. That is a rise on the 279 that happened in 2012.

Chief Insp Parsons said he thought the fact there were fewer deaths was partly due to improved car safety and safer road layouts.

He said the police role of regular drink-driving checks and handing out speeding tickets had also helped to drive down the figure.

Education was key, he added, as over seven years 19,000 young people in the Thames Valley had been shown the dangers of driving through the "Safe Drive, Stay Alive" campaign.

Nicci Saunders became an ambassador for the road safety charity Brake after her partner, Joe Wilkins, a part-time firefighter, was killed on his bicycle in May 2012.

Forty-year-old Ms Saunders said: "It doesn't matter how safe your car is, it is how good the driver is behind the wheel."

"Because of what has happened to Joe, I realise how seriously just one mistake can change someone's life."



ABOVE: Steve Jefferies, who lost his 18-year-old daughter in a fatal car crash
BELOW LEFT: Roads chief Chief Inspector Henry Parsons

OX64782

Steve Jefferies lost his 18-year-old daughter, Livi, when she crashed into an oncoming car in Adderbury in 2011.

Mr Jefferies, 63, said school pupils needed to be taught what dangers there were on the roads and perhaps impose restrictions on new drivers – such as a requirement to have a family member in the car for their first year behind the wheel, or a curfew limiting them to the road between 7am and 10pm.

He said: "Things like that would cut the number of fatalities down by a huge percentage."

But he said: "There are always going to be people killed on the road, it's inevitable."

"You don't have to be racing. You don't have to be drinking to have an accident. Some people are lucky and some people get away with it. But my daughter was unlucky."

Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service launched the 365alive road safety campaign in 2006 in a bid to save 365 lives

through education by 2016.

Mick Clarke, the service's road safety manager, said his team was constantly trying to come up with new ways of spreading road safety messages.

He said: "Nobody leaves their house in the morning with the intention of having an accident. But it only takes a couple of things to go wrong."

"What I want to do is get people out of the mindset 'It couldn't happen to me' – because it could happen to anyone."

Tony Kirkwood, from Oxfordshire County Council's road safety team, said increased safety measures at accident blackspots had also helped to cut the loss of life on Oxfordshire's roads.

But he warned: "We should take care to point out that while the long-term trend is for less fatal accidents on our roads, year-to-year comparisons can be fickle."

"We cannot assume that 2014, and the years looking forward, will continue to see totals as low as 2013."

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STRIKE FAST Bubbly, blonde, blue-eyed Devizes woman, 43, 5'6", enjoys listening to music, country walks and more, searching for a nice and genuine guy, to share caring times and the future. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 15233 or send a text to 80360

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SPARKS FLYING Fun, curvy, green-eyed Wiltshire blonde, 46, looking for genuine, loving guy, to share some caring times and future happiness. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 852093 or send a text to 80360

LET'S BE HAPPY TOGETHER Laid-back Swindon female, 47, still looking for my Mr Right, to share and enjoy life. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 158321 or send a text to 80360

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BE MY GOAL Lonely lady, 60, 5'7", simply the best, kind, loving & caring, likes antiques, car boot sales & eating out, seeks male for friendship & relationship. Bicester. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 940563 or send a text to 80360

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DO IT TOGETHER Down-to-earth, retired Bicester lady, 67, enjoys boat sales, bingo, eating out and generally always up for a laugh, would like to meet a kind, caring gent, for friendship and maybe more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 158321 or send a text to 80360

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SEEKING THE RIGHT MAN Separated, attractive Witney female, 61, 5'2", curly, likes cooking, evenings in/out and much more, seeks friendly male, to enjoy life with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 128289 or send a text to 80360

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WANT HONESTY Spiritual, genuine Didcot woman, 47, attractive, fun and carefree, have grown up children, likes cooking, cafes, music, fitness, walking and reading, seeking a caring and optimistic man, for friendship first. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 123828 or send a text to 80360

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SHARING GOOD TIMES Upbeat Burford widower, 59, own cars, works full time, takes days in and out, countryside walks, driving, looking for a similar woman for companionship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 161846 or send a text to 80360

YOUNG AT HEART? Genuine, honest, self-employed Oxford male, 47, 5'9", own home and car, likes the seaside and country walks, would like to meet a youthful, slim lady, age 55-65, to share a happy future with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 157106 or send a text to 80360

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LOVE TO HAVE A LAUGH Hardworking Oxford male, 51, 5'7", brown hair, own flat, likes socialising, cooking, nights in, seeks nice young lady for friendship leading to more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 121027 or send a text to 80360

HOPING TO FIND LOVE Caring, honest Oxford male, 52, non-smoker, likes DIY, gardening, walking, keeping fit, seeks caring, honest female, for lasting love and a happy future. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 154616 or send a text to 80360

TIME FOR A CHANGE Friendly, expressive and vibrant Kidlington male, 52, with plenty of interests in life, would like to meet a life-loving, interesting lady, to share love, laughter and the future together. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 114479 or send a text to 80360

ACCEPT EACH OTHER Easygoing Wantage male, 52, own car, works full-time, likes most sports, would like to meet an outgoing female, for good times leading to more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 135164 or send a text to 80360

PASSION FLOWER Youthful, friendly Oxford chap, 60, 5'9", dark hair, enjoys cinema, bowling, active days out and socialising, searching for a loving, happy and loyal woman, to build a lasting relationship with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 101122 or send a text to 80360

EYE TO EYE Nice gent, 53, enjoys history, coastal walks, architecture, walking, cosy nights in, cooking, DIY, would like to meet a lady for companionship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 152776 or send a text to 80360

ALL TO LOVE Kind and caring Oxfordshire male, 53, brown hair, green eyes, GSOH, searching for a nice, genuine girl, for friendship first, then maybe more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 641278 or send a text to 80360

THE START OF SOMETHING NEW? Mature Oxford man, 55, 5'8", green eyes, N/S, likes music, walking and keeping fit, GSOH, would like to meet a nice, bright lady, for fun times and see where that leads to. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 158142 or send a text to 80360

TAKE CHARGE Bright, humorous and optimistic Wallingford man, 56, would like to date with a chatty, active woman, for good times and great company. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 132836 or send a text to 80360

MAKE A DATE Young-at-heart, blue-eyed Wallingford man, 57, GSOH, enjoys dancing, would like to meet a friendly lady, to get to know each other and see where that leads to. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 159203 or send a text to 80360

MAKING A DATE Young-at-heart, blue-eyed Wallingford man, 57, GSOH, enjoys dancing, would like to meet a friendly lady, to get to know each other and see where that leads to. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 159203 or send a text to 80360

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Easygoing, friendly Didcot male, 66, enjoys walks, theatre, cosy times in, socialising, seeks a friendly, active chap, for company and more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 131800 or send a text to 80360

SOCIAL TIMES Caring, sociable 67 Abingdon-On-Thames male. I am semi-retired, presentable and cheerful, looking for similar female to share good times, fun and friendship with! Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 161819 or send a text to 80360

LET'S EXPLORE Abingdon male, 70, 5'9", medium build, easygoing and affectionate, looking for someone similar, to share fun and good times. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 453567 or send a text to 80360

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And the shows go on . . .

AUDIENCES have turned out for decades to be delighted by its shows. It is almost an Oxfordshire institution in its own right.

Despite having just 200 seats, Chipping Norton Theatre received 53,776 annual visitors in 2013 and now the curtain is raising for its 40th anniversary year.

"We are looking in two directions," said artistic director John Terry. "Back to the theatre's roots and also forward to the future."

A gallery of pictures from throughout the theatre's history will be on display alongside amusing letters of complaint about the language sometimes used in its productions of years gone by.

As well as productions and exhibitions, it also hosts hundreds of community outreach events every year.

The town is proud of its little theatre and its shows, including the popular Christmas pantomime.

The local council donates £2,500 from a budget it sets aside to help volunteer organisations.

Mayor Michael Tysoe said: "That goes to show how important we think it is. It has become part of our community."

Notable local residents who regularly watch the annual Christmas pantomime with their families include Prime Minister David Cameron, who tries to attend every year, *Top Gear* presenter

By Matt Oliver

Jeremy Clarkson and TV presenter Amanda Holden.

But the theatre comes from humble beginnings.

Its home, originally called the Citadel, was once a Salvation Army building that had fallen into disrepair after being briefly used as a furniture store.

It was then discovered by founders John and Tamara Malcolm, who promptly snapped it up in 1973 after they had put on four successful Christmas performances of *Beauty and the Beast* in the town hall.

The couple, who were both Royal Shakespeare Company actors, deployed all their wits and charm to coax donations out of trusts, councils, fundraising groups and even an anonymous benefactor, who offered them the princely sum of £6,500.

The next year they would also obtain a grant from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation – which allowed them to buy a cottage next door for conversion into a bar and gallery.

By 1975 they finally opened in an event led by Tom Baker, the actor playing The Doctor in *Doctor Who* at the time.

And 16 years later they also managed to stump up the cash through fundraising to purchase 7 Goddard's Lane, now the theatre's box office.

With that addition came extra space for rehearsals, dressing rooms and offices.

In 1996 the theatre underwent a major refurbishment, costing more than £1m. It was funded through public and private donations.

As part of the improvements, renowned European artist Graham Rust was commissioned to produce murals, which can now be seen in the bar.

By 2002 Tamara Malcolm, who had been theatre director from the beginning, decided to pass on the mantle to Caroline Sharman – but not before receiving an MBE for her services to the theatre.



Chipping
Norton
Theatre
in 1998



Theatre staff, from left, Henry Holman, volunteer; Amy Southard, stage manager; Robina Hutchings, admin; Amby Hitchcox, head of operations; Vanessa Managhan, marketing and take part officer; Helen Datson, fundraising officer; Tess Biles, senior box office assistant; and Faye Love, admin

OX64698

Ms Sharman would go on to captain the ship until 2007, when current director John Terry assumed the role.

Under his tenure, it has performed nine in-house productions and will embark on its first tour this September with its own version of *Around the World in 80 Days*.

"People seem to enjoy the things we have been doing," said Mr Terry. "The numbers show they really value us."

"We feel very strongly that we do not want to just be a venue for the privileged, and so we try to keep our ticket prices as low as possible."

"That is something we want to continue, and so we'll be looking for support from local groups to help see us through the next 40 years . . ."

The next upcoming production will be *Alarms and Excursions*. This is a series of short sketches focusing on the technology and headaches of modern life, penned by award-winning writer Michael Frayn. It will debut on February 27.

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Banbury back on track



Banbury United's Marvin Martin, right, wheels away to celebrate after scoring the winner in the 1-0 home success against Bideford

OX64834

BANBURY United got back to winning ways in the Premier Division of the Calor League after a hard-fought victory in appalling conditions at Spencer Stadium on Saturday.

A first-half goal from Marvin Martin was enough to move the Puritans up to eighth place.

Play was held up for ten minutes due to a storm.

Edwin Stein's team started the stronger, with a cross from Martin deceiving Steve Oliver in the Bideford goal, before hitting the bar.

Oliver then denied Leon Simpson.

And their pressure told when the hosts went ahead.

A Luke Cray cross came in and as Simpson challenged Oliver, it fell to the onrushing Martin, who headed in from five yards.

Simpson had a great chance to double Banbury's lead, but headed over.

After the break, Banbury were indebted to their keeper, Kwame Fordah, for preserving their lead.

He denied Kevin Squire, before pulling off a brilliant stop, diving low to his right to keep out a superb free kick from Nick Barker.

On 77 minutes, Fordah dived



Banbury's Kwame Fordah denies Nick Barker with a superb stop

Banbury Utd

1

(Martin 19)

0

Bideford Tn
low to his left to deflect Craig Duff's low drive up and over the bar.

With no further alarms, Banbury held on.

Banbury Utd: Fordah, Cray, Bridges, McNulty, Mbamarah, Ryan, Green, Martin, Simpson, Lawless, Pinto. Subs not used: Joao, Barker.

Attendance: 229.

STARS with Claire Petulengro



Service provided by IMS Leeds LS1 8LB. Calls cost 60p per minute at all times

ARIES

Mar 21-Apr 19

Don't worry so much about how things look in your personal life. Concentrate instead this week on how they feel. Aries, I'm telling you, things are looking cool. Don't feel that you're to blame, but try to take a step back and look at the bigger picture and you'll see and hear that it is their issues and not yours which are to blame. The chance to get away to somewhere new and exciting gives you a much needed boost. Ring now to hear why this is a great week for tests.

0906 585 4360

LIBRA

Sep 23-Oct 22

Someone who used to be all over you like a rash is now playing things decidedly cool. Don't feel that you're to blame, but try to take a step back and look at the bigger picture and you'll see and hear that it is their issues and not yours which are to blame. The chance to get away to somewhere new and exciting gives you a much needed boost. Ring now to hear why this is a great week for tests.

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TAURUS

Apr 20-May 20

Many Taurians will be finding true love, but may have to make major changes to their personal and professional lives in order to follow their hearts. Careful how you explain your plans to friends and family who will need to be convinced that you're speaking with both your head and your heart to show support. Positive changes within the home come from Thursday. Ring now for answers.

0906 585 4361

SCORPIO

Oct 23-Nov 21

You're being fed a series of lies by people who are either unqualified or simply don't understand what you are involved in or what is going on. Try to make your own decisions and find out your own facts. It could make all the difference financially and professionally. Impromptu offers of a night out reveal someone has deeper feelings for you than you thought. Ring now. I want to talk to you.

0906 585 4362

GEMINI

May 21-Jun 20

There was a time when you believed you had to fit your life around other people and that you were not important enough to be a priority. I'm hoping now that the last three weeks have proved to you why and how you can have self-respect. Just don't lose it this week. Mercury hands you the power to talk and be listened to this week. Call now to hear why I believe in you.

0906 585 4363

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 22-Dec 21

Emotions run high in the workplace this week and you may find yourself making uneducated and impulsive decisions. Promise yourself that if you haven't got anything nice to say, then you won't say anything at all. If I can't save just one, but several important relationships in your life. Give me a call to hear how Saturn favours you starting up new businesses or entering new jobs.

0906 585 4364

CANCER

Jun 21-Jul 20

A stubborn mood the stars have placed over for you can, for once, work in your favour as you are able to see straight through any white lies which others try to feed you. A let down in your career turns out to be a blessing in disguise, especially with the ideas and plans which are predicted to take its place. Faces you meet socially benefit your career and finances. Call now, we need to talk.

0906 585 4365

GEMINI

Jul 23-Aug 22

Don't feel sorry for people who have not helped you. There was a time when you didn't suffer fools gladly, but now you seem to be only too willing to go out of your way for those who treat you as a second class citizen. Time to raise your standards. Job interviews and auditions go really well this week. Ring now to hear who can't stop thinking about you.

0906 585 4366

AQUARIUS

Jan 20-Feb 18

Pisces boost your career midweek. You may say things you don't mean just to fill the space which has been left between you and another. You could end up making more of a mess to clean up than you started with. Think about the future not just the day you are in. It can help you to avoid breaking another's heart. Ring now to hear why I'm so excited about this year for you.

0906 585 4367

PISCES

Feb 19-Mar 20

You are blessed with more psychic abilities this week, so make sure you use them well. Not a time to waste your day, but instead you should be focusing on the most difficult areas of your life. No one will be able to pull the wool over your eyes and decisions you make form the basis for the rest of your life. Ring now to hear how you're about to make a choice which will change your life.

0906 585 4368

VIRGO

Aug 23-Sep 22

The stars are pursuing make it hard for any of us to cope on our own completely. New friends you have made are not all they at first seemed. Be careful about telling them too much about your life. They could use it against you. Ring now to hear why this is a great time for buying and selling homes.

0906 585 4369

LEO

Oct 23-Nov 21

You're going to have to do the work of others this week, as forced changes which the stars are pursuing make it hard for any of us to cope on our own completely. New friends you have made are not all they at first seemed. Be careful about telling them too much about your life. They could use it against you. Ring now to hear why this is a great time for buying and selling homes.

0906 585 4370

PISCES

Feb 19-Mar 20

You're going to have to do the work of others this week, as forced changes which the stars are pursuing make it hard for any of us to cope on our own completely. New friends you have made are not all they at first seemed. Be careful about telling them too much about your life. They could use it against you. Ring now to hear why this is a great time for buying and selling homes.

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Academy Awards miss out on a sparkling little gem

INSIDE LLEWYN DAVIS (15, 105 mins) Comedy/Drama/Musical/Romance. Oscar Isaac, Carey Mulligan, Justin Timberlake, John Goodman, Garrett Hedlund, Ethan Phillips, Robin Bartlett, Jeanine Serralles, Adam Driver, Stark Sands. Directors: Joel & Ethan Coen.

In a year littered with terrific films and eye-catching performances, one or two gems were always going to be short-changed at the Academy Awards nominations.

Few could have predicted that Joel and Ethan Coen, who won four golden statuettes for *No Country For Old Men* and *Fargo*, would be among those casualties when they were armed with this delightful and artfully composed comedy drama.

Admittedly, *Inside Llewyn Davis* moves to its own soft beat, the colour palette is earthy and the humour dry rather than laugh-out-loud funny. But the script is peppered with polished one-liners, the direction elegant and performances are exemplary.

Every frame beautifully harks back to the Greenwich Village folk scene of the early 1960s.

Like the central character, essayed by Oscar Isaac who should have usurped Christian Bale on the Oscars shortlist, the Coens' film has been unfairly overshadowed.

Isaac plays the eponymous musician, who has yet to recover from the suicide of his singing partner. He ricochets from one gig to the next, begging for temporary refuge on the couches of friends including Mitch Gorfein (Ethan

Phillips) and his wife Lillian (Robin Bartlett).

By accident, Llewyn lets out the Gorfeins' cat and he embarks on a mission to track down the feline before his hosts notice the animal is missing.

Thankfully, Llewyn locates the animal but since he is unable to return it to the locked apartment, the singer-songwriter takes his four-legged nemesis to the flat of friends Jim (Justin Timberlake) and Jean (Carey Mulligan), who are also a singing duo.

Jean's frustrations with Llewyn soon boil over.

"Everything you touch turns to s*** – like King Midas's idiot brother!" she seethes, eventually revealing the source of her ire.

Llewyn still crashes at Jean and Jim's flat, with a cheery Army recruit and aspiring folk singer called Troy Nelson (Stark Sands).

"Did you meet Elvis?" enquires Oscar casually.

"No, I did not meet Private Presley," Troy crisply responds.

When the Gorfeins' cat escapes for a second time, Llewyn resigns himself to telling them the horrible truth and heads to Chicago for an important audition in the company of drug-addicted jazz musician Roland Turner (John Goodman) and his driver, Johnny Five (Garrett Hedlund).

Interspersed with musical performances by the cast, *Inside Llewyn Davis* is another offbeat character study from the Coens proving what goes around, comes around.



Oscar Isaac, playing the lead role in *Inside Llewyn Davis*, with the comic cat

Isaac is terrific, weathering each outrageous misfortune with the same look of mournful resignation, while Mulligan plays effectively against type as a feisty independent woman, who isn't afraid to speak her mind.

Colourful supporting performances provide bookmarks for Llewyn's journey of self-discovery and the cat, which lands the protagonist in trouble, inevitably provides one of the film's comical highpoints.

CakeWhat's on

Music

FRIDAY: Langdale Hall, Langdale, **Witney:** Witney Festival of Music. In aid of Sobell House – non-stop music from acts including Nikki Loy, Jamie Felton and Rough Cut Ruby. Booking advisable. From 7pm. 07969 325804.

New Theatre, George Street, Oxford: One Night of Elvis. Lee 'Memphis' King performs a brand new show with band and backing singers. £20.50/£22. 7.30pm. 0844 847 1585 and 1588.

Sun Inn, High Street, Hook Norton: Cuckoo's Nest. Covers covers duo. Free. 9pm. 01608 737570.

SATURDAY: Banbury Cross, Butchers Road, Banbury: Pete McCray with soul, reggae and more. Free. 9pm. 01295 279014.

Lampt Arms, Tadmarton, Banbury: Elvis tribute with Kev Cripps. A fun-filled tribute to the king of rock and roll. Free. 9pm. 01295 780070.

New Theatre, George Street, Oxford: Ultimate rhythm and blues – 50th anniversary. Featuring The

Zombies, The Animals, The Yardbirds, Spencer Davis and Maggie Bell. £28.50/£26. 7.30pm. 0844 847 1585 and 1588.

Theatre

The Mill Arts Centre, Spiceball Park, Banbury:

Jan 30, The Sherry Babys. Tribute to The Jersey Boys, Frankie Valli and The 4 Seasons. Discover how four New Jersey boys from the wrong side of the tracks invented their own unique sound, were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and sold 100m records worldwide. 18.8pm.

Feb 1, All-Star Spanish Night. Flamenco dance performance from young and rising stars visiting from Spain for the first time. Doors 7.30pm. £11 (no concession) to include glass of sangria and nibbles.

Feb 2, Monster Ceilidh Band on a crusade to bring a powerfully modern and un-patronising approach to ceilidh fusion music. 8pm. £15, concession £13. Box office: 01608 642350.

standing event.

Box office: 01295 279002.

The Theatre, Spring Street, Chipping Norton:

Jan 30, Screening of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* from the National Theatre, live. 7pm. When an old adversary threatens Rome, the city calls once more on her hero and defender: Coriolanus. Feb 1, Son Yambu – playing authentic music that originated in the streets of eastern Cuba, fusing Spanish and African rhythms. 7.45pm.

Feb 1, *Blast Off*. A fresh and fantastically fun show, that serves as a perfect introduction to the world of live performance. 1.30am. Feb 2, Gordon Giltrap. A show suitable for all music lovers of every age. 7.45pm.

Feb 4, Eric Knowles – *What's It Worth*. A knowledgeable and friendly antiques expert who has graced the BBC's *Antiques Roadshow* and radio programmes for over 20 years, returns with his ever-changing and irreverent two-hour show. 7.45pm. Box office: 01608 642350.



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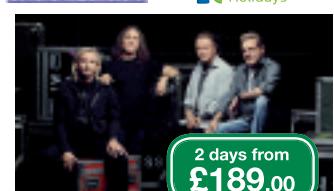
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